# **Washington State Auditor's Office**

### **Audit Report**

### **Audit Services**

Report No. 57871

#### MASON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

January 1, 1995 Through December 31, 1995

Issue Date: December 6, 1996

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# Independent Auditor's Report On Compliance With Laws And Regulations At The Financial Statement Level (Plus Additional State Compliance Requirements Per RCW 43.09.260)

Board of Commissioners Mason County Shelton, Washington

We have audited the general-purpose financial statements, as listed in the table of contents, of Mason County, Washington, as of and for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1995, and have issued our report thereon dated August 23, 1996.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

Compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grants applicable to Mason County is the responsibility of the county's management. As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement, we performed tests of the county's compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grants.

We also performed additional tests of compliance with state laws and regulations as required by *Revised Code of Washington* (RCW) 43.09.260. This statute requires the State Auditor to inquire as to whether the county complied with the laws and the *Constitution of the State of Washington*, its own ordinances and orders, and the requirements of the State Auditor's Office. Our responsibility is to examine, on a test basis, evidence about the county's compliance with those requirements and to make a reasonable effort to identify any instances of misfeasance, malfeasance, or nonfeasance in office on the part of any public officer or employee and to report any such instance to the management of the county and to the Attorney General. However, the objective of our audit of the financial statements was not to provide an opinion on overall compliance with these provisions. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion.

The results of our tests disclosed no instances of material noncompliance that are required to be reported herein under *Government Auditing Standards*. However, we noted an instance of noncompliance immaterial to the financial statements which is identified in the Schedule of Findings accompanying this report.

This report is intended for the information of management and the board of commissioners and to meet our statutory reporting obligations. This report is a matter of public record and its distribution is not limited. It also serves to disseminate information to the public as a reporting tool to help citizens assess government operations.

Brian Sonntag State Auditor

### Independent Auditor's Report On Internal Control Structure At The Financial Statement Level

Board of Commissioners Mason County Shelton, Washington

We have audited the general-purpose financial statements of Mason County, Washington, as of and for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1995, and have issued our report thereon dated August 23, 1996.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

The management of the county is responsible for establishing and maintaining an internal control structure. In fulfilling this responsibility, estimates and judgments by management are required to assess the expected benefits and related costs of internal control structure policies and procedures. The objectives of an internal control structure are to provide management with reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that assets are safeguarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition, and that transactions are executed in accordance with management's authorization and recorded properly to permit the preparation of financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Because of inherent limitations in any internal control structure, errors or irregularities may nevertheless occur and not be detected. Also, projection of any evaluation of the structure to future periods is subject to the risk that procedures may become inadequate because of changes in conditions or that the effectiveness of the design and operation of policies and procedures may deteriorate.

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements of the county, we obtained an understanding of the internal control structure. With respect to the internal control structure, we obtained an understanding of the design of relevant policies and procedures and whether they have been placed in operation, and we assessed control risk in order to determine our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements and not to provide an opinion on the internal control structure. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion.

We noted certain matters involving the internal control structure and its operation that we consider to be reportable conditions under standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Reportable conditions involve matters coming to our attention relating to significant deficiencies in the design or operation of the internal control structure that, in our judgment, could adversely affect the entity's ability to record, process, summarize, and report financial data consistent with the assertions of management in the financial statements. The matters involving the internal

control structure and its operation that we consider to be reportable conditions are included in the Schedule of Findings accompanying this report.

A material weakness is a reportable condition in which the design or operation of one or more of the specific internal control structure elements does not reduce to a relatively low level the risk that errors or irregularities in amounts that would be material in relation to the financial statements being audited may occur and not be detected within a timely period by employees in the normal course of performing their assigned functions.

Our consideration of the internal control structure would not necessarily disclose all matters in the internal control structure that might be reportable conditions and, accordingly, would not necessarily disclose all reportable conditions that are also considered to be material weaknesses as defined above. However, we believe none of the reportable conditions described in the Schedule of Findings is a material weakness.

This report is intended for the information of management and the board of commissioners and to meet our statutory reporting obligations. This report is a matter of public record and its distribution is not limited. It also serves to disseminate information to the public as a reporting tool to help citizens assess government operations.

Brian Sonntag State Auditor

#### Schedule Of Findings

1. The County Public Works Department Should Improve Controls Over Inventories

During our audit of the public works department we noted the following internal accounting control weaknesses in the inventories of fuels and parts:

- a. Internal controls over the fuel inventories were inadequate to establish accountability.
  - (1) Gas and diesel fuel could be pumped using either a vehicle key or a bulk fuel key. Numerous employees in the public works department had access to the bulk fuel key and the vehicle keys. There was no method to assign responsibility for fuel usage to the employee who pumped the fuel or to determine when the fuel was pumped.
  - (2) There was no comparison of vehicle fuel usage to mileage for any of the county vehicles. Without such a periodic review of fuel mileage, errors or irregularities related to fuel usage could occur without detection in a timely manner.
  - (3) There were significant unexplained variances between the fuel inventories calculated by adding fuel purchases and subtracting fuel usage to the actual fuel inventories measured by periodic dipstick readings.
  - (4) There were significant unresolved differences between the fuel usage based on the pump meters and the usage based on the individual vehicle meters.
- b. There was no accountability for the propane gas inventory. The propane storage tank was not fitted with a meter to measure usage.
- c. There were no count sheets available documenting the physical inventory of parts conducted at year end. In addition, there were no adjustments documented between the physical count and the inventory system.
- d. There were significant unexplained shortages between the book amounts and the physical inventory amounts of oils and antifreeze at year end.

Without adequate accounting controls, the fuel and parts inventories are not properly safeguarded against loss or theft.

<u>We recommend</u> that the county implement the necessary improvements in the controls over these inventories and at a minimum:

a. Establish proper accountability over fuel by measuring usage by individual employees and vehicles.

- b. Establish accountability over propane by metering the usage.
- c. Retain all inventory count sheets and adjustments. Also, these count sheets should be signed and dated by the employees performing the count. Any adjustments to the inventory report made as a result of the physical count should be logged or journalized for future reference by management and auditors.
- d. Management review of all significant shortages between the book inventories and the physical count of inventory. Management should also determine the reasons for any such shortages.

#### Auditee's Response

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to respond to the comments contained in your draft audit report. The finding in the report was directed at weaknesses in the Public Works department. The following responses address those areas:

a. Establish proper accountability over fuel by measuring usage by individual employees and vehicles.

Our existing system does not allow us to collect this data. The system we have planned will use magnetic credit type cards, one for the vehicle and one for the employee to allow us to determine who is getting fuel, when they are getting fuel and the vehicle usage. We will be upgrading our entire fueling system at the latest by December 1998. It is possible we will have a new system during 1997.

b. Establish accountability over propane by metering the usage.

A meter was installed in September 1996.

c. Retain all inventory count sheets and adjustments. Also, these count sheets should be signed and dated by the employees performing the count. Any adjustments to the inventory report made as a result of the physical count should be logged or journalized for future reference by management and auditors.

Our inventory procedures will be changed for this end of year inventory to comply with these requirements.

d. Management review of all significant differences between the book inventories and the physical count of inventory. Management should also determine the reasons for any such differences.

The ER&R Manager will participate in the shop inventory this year. Also, the ER&R Manager will review all differences found in the end of the year ER&R inventories.

#### **Auditor's Concluding Remarks**

We appreciate the county commissioners' commitment to resolve the issues noted in our findings. Based on their response, the recommendations are being addressed and we will review these areas again in our next audit of the county.

We wish to thank the county personnel and management for their cooperation and assistance during the audit.

### Independent Auditor's Report On Financial Statements And Additional Information

Board of Commissioners Mason County Shelton, Washington

We have audited the accompanying general-purpose financial statements of Mason County, Washington, as of and for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1995, as listed in the table of contents. These financial statements are the responsibility of the county's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatements. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Mason County at December 31, 1995, and the results of its operations and cash flows of its proprietary fund types for the fiscal year then ended, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Our audit was made for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements taken as a whole. The accompanying Schedule of State Financial Assistance listed in the table of contents presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and, in our opinion, is fairly presented in all material respects in relation to the financial statements taken as a whole.

The special purpose districts listed in the supporting schedule are audited as a part of the trust and agency funds of Mason County.

In accordance with Government Auditing Standards, we have also issued a report dated August 23
1996, on our consideration of the county's internal control structure and a report dated August 23
1996, on its compliance with laws and regulations.

Brian Sonntag State Auditor

### Independent Auditor's Report On Supplementary Information Schedule Of Federal Financial Assistance

Board of Commissioners Mason County Shelton, Washington

We have audited the general-purpose financial statements of Mason County, Washington, as of and for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1995, and have issued our report thereon dated August 23, 1996. These financial statements are the responsibility of the county's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

Our audit was made for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements of Mason County taken as a whole. The accompanying Schedule of Federal Financial Assistance is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements. The information in the schedule has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and, in our opinion, is fairly presented in all material respects in relation to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Brian Sonntag State Auditor

#### Independent Auditor's Report On Compliance With The General Requirements Applicable To Federal Financial Assistance Programs

Board of Commissioners Mason County Shelton, Washington

We have audited the general-purpose financial statements of Mason County, Washington, as of and for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1995, and have issued our report thereon dated August 23, 1996.

We have applied procedures to test the county's compliance with the following requirements applicable to its federal financial assistance programs, which are identified in the Schedule of Federal Financial Assistance, for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1995:

- Political activity
- Davis-Bacon Act
- Civil rights
- Cash management
- Relocation assistance and real property acquisition
- Federal financial reports
- Allowable costs/cost principles
- Drug-Free Workplace Act
- Administrative requirements, including subrecipient monitoring

Our procedures were limited to the applicable procedures described in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) *Compliance Supplement for Single Audits of State and Local Governments* or alternative procedures. Our procedures were substantially less in scope than an audit, the objective of which is the expression of an opinion on the county's compliance with the requirements listed in the preceding paragraph. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion.

With respect to the items tested, the results of those procedures disclosed no material instances of noncompliance with the requirements listed in the second paragraph of this report. With respect to items not tested, nothing came to our attention that caused us to believe that the county had not complied, in all material respects, with those requirements.

This report is intended for the information of management and the board of commissioners and to meet our statutory reporting obligations. This report is a matter of public record and its distribution is not limited. It also serves to disseminate information to the public as a reporting tool to help citizens assess government operations.

Brian Sonntag State Auditor

#### Independent Auditor's Report On Compliance With Specific Requirements Applicable To Major Federal Financial Assistance Programs

Board of Commissioners Mason County Shelton, Washington

We have audited the general-purpose financial statements of Mason County, Washington, as of and for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1995, and have issued our report thereon dated August 23, 1996.

We also have audited the county's compliance with the requirements applicable to its major federal financial assistance program, which is identified in the accompanying Schedule of Federal Financial Assistance, for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1995. Those requirements include:

- types of services allowed or unallowed
- eligibility
- matching, level of effort, or earmarking
- reporting
- special tests and provisions related to vouchers, right-of-way, extensions, and sampling and testing as described in the OMB Compliance Supplement for Single Audits of State and Local Governments
- claims for advances and reimbursements
- and amounts claimed or used for matching

The management of the county is responsible for the county's compliance with those requirements. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on compliance with those requirements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit of compliance with those requirements in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and OMB Circular A-128, *Audits of State and Local Governments*. Those standards and OMB Circular A-128 require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether material noncompliance with the requirements referred to above occurred. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence about the county's compliance with those requirements. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, Mason County complied, in all material respects, with the requirements referred to in the second paragraph of this report that are applicable to its major federal financial assistance program for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1995.

This report is intended for the information of management and the board of commissioners and to meet our statutory reporting obligations. This report is a matter of public record and its distribution is not

limited. It also serves to disseminate information to the public as a reporting tool to help citizens assess government operations.
Brian Sonntag State Auditor
August 23, 1996

#### Independent Auditor's Report On Compliance With Specific Requirements Applicable To Nonmajor Federal Financial Assistance Program Transactions

Board of Commissioners Mason County Shelton, Washington

We have audited the general-purpose financial statements of Mason County, Washington, as of and for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1995, and have issued our report thereon dated August 23, 1996.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements of the county and with our consideration of the county's control structure used to administer its federal financial assistance programs, as required by OMB Circular A-128, *Audits of State and Local Governments*, we selected certain transactions applicable to certain nonmajor federal financial assistance programs for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1995. As required by OMB Circular A-128, we have performed auditing procedures to test compliance with the requirements governing allowability of the program expenditures and eligibility of the individuals or groups to whom the county provides federal financial assistance that are applicable to those transactions. Our procedures were substantially less in scope than an audit, the objective of which is the expression of an opinion on the county's compliance with these requirements. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion.

With respect to the items tested, the results of those procedures disclosed no material instances of noncompliance with the requirements listed in the preceding paragraph. With respect to the items not tested, nothing came to our attention that caused us to believe that Mason County had not complied, in all material respects, with those requirements.

This report is intended for the information of management and the board of commissioners and to meet our statutory reporting obligations. This report is a matter of public record and its distribution is not limited. It also serves to disseminate information to the public as a reporting tool to help citizens assess government operations.

Brian Sonntag State Auditor

# Independent Auditor's Report On Internal Control Structure Used In Administering Federal Financial Assistance Programs

Board of Commissioners Mason County Shelton, Washington

We have audited the general-purpose financial statements of Mason County, Washington, as of and for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1995, and have issued our report thereon dated August 23, 1996. We have also audited their compliance with requirements applicable to major federal financial assistance programs and have issued our report thereon dated August 23, 1996.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and the provisions of OMB Circular A-128, *Audits of State and Local Governments*. Those standards and OMB Circular A-128 require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement and about whether the county complied with laws and regulations, noncompliance with which would be material to a major federal financial assistance program.

In planning and performing our audit, we considered the county's internal control structure in order to determine our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements and on compliance with requirements applicable to major federal assistance programs and to report on the internal control structure in accordance with OMB Circular A-128. This report addresses our consideration of internal control structure policies and procedures relevant to compliance with requirements applicable to federal financial assistance programs. We have addressed internal control structure policies and procedures relevant to our audit of the financial statements in a separate report dated August 23, 1996.

The management of the county is responsible for establishing and maintaining an internal control structure. In fulfilling this responsibility, estimates and judgments by management are required to assess the expected benefits and related costs of internal control structure policies and procedures. The objectives of an internal control structure are to provide management with reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that:

- Assets are safeguarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition.
- Transactions are executed in accordance with management's authorization and recorded properly to permit the preparation of financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.
- Federal financial assistance programs are managed in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Because of inherent limitations in any internal control structure, errors, irregularities, or instances of noncompliance may nevertheless occur and not be detected. Also, projection of any evaluation of the structure to future periods is subject to the risk that procedures may become inadequate because of changes in conditions or that the effectiveness of the design and operation of policies and procedures may deteriorate.

For the purpose of this report, we have classified the significant internal control structure policies and procedures used in administering federal financial assistance programs in the following categories:

#### Accounting Controls

- Cash receipts
- Cash disbursements
- Receivables
- Accounts payable
- Purchasing and receiving
- Payroll
- Inventory control
- Property, plant, and equipment
- General ledger

#### • General Requirements

- Political activity
- Davis-Bacon Act
- Civil rights
- Cash management
- Relocation assistance and real property acquisition
- Federal financial reports
- Allowable costs/cost principles
- Drug-Free Workplace Act
- Administrative requirements, including subrecipient monitoring

#### Specific Requirements

- Types of services
- Eligibility
- Matching, level of effort, earmarking
- Reporting
- Special requirements

#### • Claims For Advances And Reimbursements

#### Amounts Claimed Or Used For Matching

For all of the applicable internal control structure categories listed above, we obtained an understanding of the design of relevant policies and procedures and determined whether they have been placed in operation, and we assessed control risk.

During the fiscal year ended December 31, 1995, the county expended 61 percent of its total federal financial assistance under a major federal financial assistance program.

We performed tests of controls, as required by OMB Circular A-128, to evaluate the effectiveness of the design and operation of internal control structure policies and procedures that we considered relevant to preventing or detecting material noncompliance with specific requirements, general requirements, and requirements governing claims for advances and reimbursements, and amounts claimed or used for matching that are applicable to the county's major federal financial assistance

program, which is identified in the accompanying Schedule of Federal Financial Assistance. Our procedures were less in scope than would be necessary to render an opinion on these internal control structure policies and procedures. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion.

Our consideration of the internal control structure policies and procedures used in administering federal financial assistance would not necessarily disclose all matters in the internal control structure that might be material weaknesses under standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. A material weakness is a reportable condition in which the design or operation of one or more of the internal control structure elements does not reduce to a relatively low level the risk that noncompliance with laws and regulations that would be material to a federal financial assistance program may occur and not be detected within a timely period by employees in the normal course of performing their assigned functions. We noted no matters involving the internal control structure and its operation that we consider to be material weaknesses.

This report is intended for the information of management and the board of commissioners and to meet our statutory reporting obligations. This report is a matter of public record and its distribution is not limited. It also serves to disseminate information to the public as a reporting tool to help citizens assess government operations.

Brian Sonntag State Auditor

#### **Status Of Prior Findings**

The findings contained in the prior audit report were resolved as follows:

#### 1. Accounting Controls And Procedures Should Be Improved

<u>Resolution</u>: The county has corrected some of the deficiencies reported in the prior audit. We noted improvements in accounting controls and procedures in regards to financial reporting, staff training, and proper coding of transactions. We will review this area again in our next audit.

#### 2. <u>Data Processing Controls Should Be Improved</u>

<u>Resolution</u>: The county has corrected some of the deficiencies reported in the prior audit. The county is working on drafting a disaster recovery plan and on establishing written procedures, policies, and standards for the security system. We will review this area again in our next audit.

#### 3. Mason County Should Prepare Timely And Accurate Financial Reports

<u>Resolution</u>: This condition has been resolved. The county prepared and submitted a complete annual report in accordance with the requirements of RCW 43.09.230.

# 4. <u>The Sheriff's Department Should Comply With The Uniform Controlled Substances Act</u> Regarding Seizure And Forfeiture And Should Deposit All Public Moneys With The County Treasurer

<u>Resolution</u>: This condition has been resolved. The sheriff's department has deposited forfeited funds with the county treasurer and remitted such funds to the state treasurer in accordance with the Act.